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April 5, 2017

Dr. Charles T. Russo
Superintendent of Schools
Members of the Board of Education
East Moriches Union Free School District
9 Adelaide Avenue
East Moriches, NY 11940

Report Number: B17-7-4

Dear Dr. Russo and Members of the Board of Education:

Pursuant to Chapter 354 of the Laws of 2006, the State Legislature authorized the East Moriches Union Free School District to issue debt not to exceed \$2 million to liquidate the accumulated deficit in the District's general fund as of June 30, 2006. New York State Local Finance Law Section 10.10 requires municipalities and school districts that have been authorized to issue obligations to fund operating deficits to submit to the State Comptroller each year, starting with the fiscal year during which the local government is authorized to issue obligations and for each subsequent fiscal year during which the deficit obligations are outstanding, their proposed budget for the next succeeding fiscal year.

The budget must be submitted no later than 30 days before the date scheduled for the governing board's vote on its adoption or the last date on which the budget may be finally adopted, whichever is earlier. The State Comptroller must examine the proposed budget and make such recommendations on the proposed budget as deemed appropriate. Recommendations, if any, are made after the examination into the estimates of the District's revenues and expenditures.

Our Office has recently completed a review of the District's proposed budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year. The objective of the review was to provide an independent evaluation of the proposed budget. Our review addressed the following question related to the District's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year:

- Are the significant revenue and expenditure projections in the District's proposed budget reasonable?

To accomplish our objective in this review, we requested your proposed budget, salary schedules, debt payment schedules and other pertinent information. We identified and examined significant estimated revenues and expenditures for reasonableness with emphasis on significant and/or unrealistic increases or decreases. We analyzed, verified and/or corroborated trend data and estimates, where appropriate. We identified any significant new or unusually high revenue or expenditure estimates, made appropriate inquiries and reviewed supporting documentation to determine the nature of the items and to assess whether the estimate was realistic and reasonable.

The scope of our review does not constitute an audit under generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). We do not offer comments or make specific recommendations on public policy decisions, such as the type and level of services under consideration to be provided.

The proposed budget package submitted for review for the 2017-18 fiscal year consisted of the following:

- 2017-18 Proposed Budget
- Supplementary Information

The proposed budget submitted to our Office is summarized as follows:

Fund	Appropriations and Provisions for Other Uses	Estimated Revenue	Appropriated Fund Balance	Real Property Taxes
General	\$27,313,134	\$7,358,140	\$0	\$19,954,994

Based on the results of our review, we found that the significant revenue and expenditure projections in the proposed budget are reasonable.

Tax Cap Compliance

The State Legislature and the Governor enacted Chapter 97 of the Laws of 2011 that established a tax levy limit on all local governments and school districts, which was effective beginning in the 2012 fiscal year. The law precludes local governments and school districts from adopting a budget with a tax levy that exceeds the prior year tax levy by more than 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less, and certain exclusions permitted by law, unless 60 percent of District voters approve a budget that requires a tax levy that exceeds the statutory limit.

The District's proposed budget includes a tax levy of \$19,954,994. In adopting the 2017-18 budget, the Board should be mindful of the legal requirement to maintain the tax levy increase to no more than the tax levy limit as permitted by law, unless it obtains the proper voter approval to override the tax levy limit.

We request that you provide us with a copy of the adopted budget.

We hope that this information is useful as you adopt the upcoming budget for the District. If you have any questions on the scope of our work, please feel free to contact Ira McCracken, Chief Examiner of the Long Island office, at (631) 952-6534.

Sincerely,

Gabriel F. Deyo
Deputy Comptroller

cc: Jacqueline Franke, District Clerk
Julie Davis Lutz, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer, Eastern Suffolk BOCES
Hon. Catharine Young, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Hon. Herman D. Farrell, Jr., Chair, Assembly Ways and Means Committee
Hon. Fred W. Thiele, Jr., NYS Assembly
Hon. Kenneth P. LaValle, NYS Senate
Robert F. Mujica, Jr., Director, Division of the Budget
MaryEllen Elia, Commissioner, State Education Department
Thalia J. Melendez, Director, Office of Audit Services, State Education Department
Andrew A. SanFilippo, Executive Deputy Comptroller
Ira McCracken, Chief Examiner